



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/46/PV.55
13 December 1991

ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 55th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 26 November 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)
later: Mr. WILENSKI (Australia)
(Vice-President)

- Organization of work
- Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity [30]
 - (a) Report of the Secretary-General
 - (b) Draft resolution
- The situation in the Middle East: reports of the Secretary-General [35]

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to inform members that on Tuesday, 3 December 1991, at 10 a.m., the Assembly will take up agenda item 16, entitled "Appointment of the Secretary-General", and immediately afterwards continue its consideration of agenda item 37, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa".

With regard to agenda item 16, I trust that representatives will be punctual as befits the significance and importance of the occasion.

AGENDA ITEM 30

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

- (a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/468 and Add.1 and 2)
- (b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.19/Rev.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of Gabon, who will introduce the draft resolution in the course of his statement.

Mr. DANGUE REWAKA (Gabon) (interpretation from French): We are pleased with the dynamic development that has taken place and with the ever-stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) - the more so since for almost 30 years now this cooperation, which has become traditional, has been based on the principles of law and justice and of progress in all fields of mutual interest to the two organizations.

Following recent changes, which, fortunately, have opened a new era of interdependence and understanding between nations, with promising prospects of international cooperation in the political, economic, social, technical, legal, cultural and administrative spheres, how could we fail to encourage this positive development of the relationship between the United Nations and the OAU?

The United Nations and the OAU welcomed and celebrated the independence of Namibia. We were all gratified at the United Nations plan, without whose success independence would undoubtedly not yet have taken place. Unfortunately, and in spite of recent events, the two organizations remain at the stage of hope as regards political evolution in South Africa. This is in particular a question of the insufficiency of measures being taken to establish a climate conducive to the smooth conduct and early success of negotiations aimed at the complete elimination of apartheid.

It was therefore a source of encouragement that, through resolution 44/244, adopted by consensus, the General Assembly (para. 3) called upon all Governments and intergovernmental organizations to maintain measures aimed at encouraging the South African regime to eradicate apartheid until there was clear evidence of profound and irreversible changes, bearing in mind the

(Mr. Dangué Rewaka, Gabon)

objectives of the Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, devoted to the question of apartheid.

At the level of their secretariats, the OAU, the United Nations and their respective organs continue to hold periodic consultations, which constitute an excellent mechanism of cooperation between the two organizations. In this respect I wish to pay a well-deserved tribute not only to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the OAU but also to all the agencies that have participated actively in the effective functioning of this mechanism.

We should like to mention the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization - to mention just a few bodies.

The report of the Secretary-General which is contained in document A/46/468, together with its addenda 1 and 2, dated 2 October 1991, details the many spheres of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. It points out the progress that has been made in these fields, despite all the work that remains to be done given the broad range of problems still confronting Africa.

(Mr. Dangué Rewaka, Gabon)

The critical economic situation that has prevailed in Africa since the mid-1980s is no longer a secret to anyone. The rate of growth of the African countries in general has steadily deteriorated, partly because of the drop in the prices of raw materials, the negative transfer of resources, the debt burden and natural disasters, as well as the consequences of policies of destabilization adopted by South Africa against its neighbours in southern Africa.

The continued decline in living standards that results from these factors puts unprecedented political, social and economic pressure on African Governments. At the urging of international financial institutions - especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund - Africa has undertaken profound structural-adjustment policies that involve serious political and socio-economic risks. Unfortunately, however, these reforms, which have been carried out by many third world countries - in particular, the African countries - have not been helped by the international situation. The result is that today Africa includes almost three quarters of the world's least developed countries. Furthermore, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 has not fulfilled expectations, as can be seen from the report (A/46/41) of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly on the Review and Appraisal of that Programme.

All those factors, aggravated by debt servicing, were described in great detail and eloquently by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity - the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida - in the statement that he made from this rostrum on 4 October 1991.

(Mr. Dangué Rewaka, Gabon)

Africa therefore appeals to the United Nations and to the international community in general to work effectively to secure respect for the commitments and successful attainment of the objectives set out in the United Nations New Programme of Cooperation For the Development of Africa in the 1990s, in accordance with the relevant, follow-up decisions that will be taken at this session of the General Assembly.

In this context, I have the pleasure, on behalf of the African Group, of introducing draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". This is the traditional draft resolution, whose main objective is to outline the broad areas of political, social and economic cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU.

(Mr. Dangué Rewaka, Gabon)

Although it refers to the action of the international community, the major roles will be taken by the secretariats of the two organizations.

Hence, I should like to mention a few of the elements related to the priority areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU.

In the political sphere, under paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1 the General Assembly would reiterate

"the determination of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, to continue its efforts for the early eradication of racial discrimination and apartheid in South Africa and to provide adequate assistance to that end".

In the social sphere, under paragraph 9 of the draft resolution the Assembly would urge

"all Member States and regional and international organizations, in particular those of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations to provide economic and technical assistance to African countries of asylum to enable them to withstand the heavy burden imposed on their limited resources and weak infrastructure by the presence in their countries of large numbers of refugees".

In the economic sphere, under paragraph 11 of the draft resolution the Assembly would reaffirm that

"the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s will necessitate the full participation of the international community, in particular of the Governments, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and emphasizes the importance and the need to ensure the follow-up, monitoring and implementation of the Agenda in accordance with General Assembly decisions".

(Mr. Danque Rewaka, Gabon)

In paragraph 14 of the draft resolution the Assembly would urge

"the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the relevant agencies of the United Nations system to extend their support and cooperation to the member States and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for the effective organizational arrangement and smooth functioning of the African Economic Community".

As for the administrative sphere, in paragraph 21 of the draft resolution the Assembly would call upon

"the relevant organs of the United Nations system to continue to ensure the fair and equitable representation of Africa at senior and policy levels at their respective headquarters and in their regional and field operations".

As regards the implementation of these recommendations, under paragraph 20 of the draft resolution the Assembly would also request

"the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to ensure that the representatives of their secretariats continue to hold regular consultations, as and when appropriate, on the implementation of the present resolution".

Those were the few main points that I wished to stress in submitting for the Assembly's consideration draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity".

In conclusion, I should like to thank very sincerely the other regional groups for the spirit of friendship and cooperation which they showed throughout our consultations and which I hope will make it possible for the Assembly to adopt this text by consensus.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): My delegation has the honour of addressing this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on behalf of the European Community and its member States on agenda item 30, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity".

The value the Twelve attach to regional cooperation is well known to everyone. There is no harm, however, in stressing once more the benefits that are to be reaped from regional cooperation. The experience of the Twelve allows them to testify on this issue.

In view of their own development process in terms of regional cooperation, the Twelve welcome and applaud the efforts to ensure greater cooperation amongst the countries of the Organization of African Unity. These efforts merit the full support of the United Nations. The European Community and its member States note with great satisfaction the good relations that exist and are continuing to develop between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in many fields of mutual interest.

The Twelve consider that the role played by the Organization of African Unity in the consolidation of national independence, both politically and economically, and in the development of the nationhood of its members is an important one. We believe that the way in which African countries are working together deserves the full support of the United Nations. The Twelve also believe that where conflicts occur the countries most directly concerned should be encouraged to find solutions. This applies not only to political problems, but also to economic, social and environmental issues.

The Twelve fully support efforts aimed at finding regional solutions to African problems. They once again endorse the activities undertaken by the Organization of African Unity with regard to a number of complex issues. They note with interest that during this years' summit meeting of the Organization

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of African Unity discussions took place on African cooperation in the field of security. The Twelve also fully support the cooperation between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity in their quest for peaceful solutions to African problems. We welcome the joint effort of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to solve the long-standing issue of Western Sahara.

The Twelve noted with interest the statement by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in which he informed it of the results of the summit meeting which the organization held this year in Abuja. He stated in particular that African countries should fully embrace democratic culture in order to enable their peoples to enjoy fundamental human rights and to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives and well-being. In this regard the Twelve warmly welcome the exemplary democratic conduct of the elections held in Zambia six days ago, for which all who contributed to that are to be commended.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

The Twelve welcome the fact that there is a growing number of African countries moving rapidly towards political liberalization. These changes indicate a new African awareness that the continent is primarily responsible for its own fate. This awareness is reflected within the deliberations of the Organization of African Unity: over the last two or three years more attention has been paid to economic recovery and good governance. The necessity of popular participation, the creation of free and democratic institutions and the solution of acute economic restructuring problems were recognized as simultaneous tasks to be addressed in the process of development. The Twelve welcome this growing consensus on the need for full respect for universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the establishment of a democratic pluralistic society and of a Government which is responsive to the wishes and needs of its people.

The Community and its Member States hope that the Organization of African Unity will continue to contribute to this process of change by inspiring their members in this direction. Realizing that new policies cannot be established overnight, the Twelve reaffirm their commitment to assist the African countries in the process of political change.

Although Africa has been endowed with vast - often still untapped - resources, it still faces a critical economic situation. This is particularly true for the least developed countries, the largest number of which are African. The Twelve will continue, as they have in the past, to seek ways and means to help alleviate the suffering of Africa's populations caused by economic problems. The European Community and its Member States have, during the past few years, provided half of the total development aid received by the African countries. We shall naturally continue to pursue actively our

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contacts and good relations with African countries and to contribute to the search for appropriate solutions to their economic problems.

The European Community and its member States have played an active role in the final review and appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). The Twelve believe that the results of this review provide a useful framework for the development efforts of the African countries themselves as well as of the international community. The European Community and its member States will certainly try to do their utmost to honour the commitments undertaken in this respect.

In order to overcome their difficulties, however, African countries are in need of adequate assistance from the international community as a whole. The Twelve reaffirm their undertaking to pursue their efforts to provide additional resource flows to Africa which will complement domestic efforts and financial resources. The important contribution of the European Community and its member States to the continent underlines their attachment to the ultimate goal of the development of Africa.

In view of their attachment to these goals, the Twelve intend to cooperate with all relevant organizations in order to promote the economic growth and development of the continent. To this end they attach particular importance to cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, regional organizations, African Governments and non-governmental organizations.

The Twelve trust that the Organization of African Unity will continue to play an important role in African and world affairs in harmony with the guiding principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Twelve are equally convinced that the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that unite the members of the Organization of African Unity and

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

the States members of the European Community will continue to intensify in all their various aspects over the years to come.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 46/20).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now call on those representatives wishing to explain their position. May I remind them that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. PADILLA (United States of America): The United States is pleased to be able, once again, to join consensus on the resolution promoting increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). International organizations, including regional groups such as the OAU, are taking on added importance in the world today. They can do much to support the trends towards democratization increasingly found throughout the world. We wish to reiterate our continuing support for the OAU and its efforts to coordinate with the United Nations on ways to address the problems of Africa.

While we generally endorse the sentiments expressed in the resolution just adopted, an important point was overlooked. The General Assembly, regrettably, did not include in the resolution a recognition of the positive changes taking place in South Africa. We are disappointed that the States members of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations did not seize this moment to play a positive, active role in the historic efforts being made in South Africa to eradicate apartheid and bring into existence a democratic, non-racial Government.

(Mr. Padilla, United States)

Furthermore, references to acts of aggression and destabilization by the Government of South Africa focus on the past, rather than on the future. Given the encouraging developments in South Africa over the past year, the independence of Namibia, the peace accords in Angola and the ongoing negotiations in Mozambique, we see no reason to retain these outmoded references.

None the less, let me reiterate my country's conviction that the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity will continue to cooperate in achieving the important aims we all share for the continent.

Mr. VAN DER LUGT (Netherlands): The European Community and its 12 member States have already been able to explain the importance they attach to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity during the debate. In that spirit they have in the past always supported the resolutions on that subject. This year too they have joined the consensus on this resolution. However, draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1, submitted at this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, presents a number of difficulties. With regard to the economic aspects, the Twelve, while underlining that the primary responsibility for development lies with the African countries themselves, would have welcomed a reference in the draft resolution to the considerable and continuing efforts by the international community and the donor countries in support of the actions undertaken by the African countries.

(Mr. Van Der Lugt, Netherlands)

The Twelve understand that any cooperation and assistance provided to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) by the United Nations, as requested in paragraph 10, must pay due regard to the competence of the relevant organs of the United Nations. The Twelve believe that the resolution does not take into account sufficiently the recent developments in the region. Regarding the situation in southern Africa, they do not agree with the apparent presumption that the South African Government still engages in the destabilization of the neighbouring countries.

Finally, with regard to cooperation with the OAU on the issue of decolonization, the Twelve attach importance to making arrangements which reflect current requirements. We note that once the question of Western Sahara is resolved, there will be no Non-Self-Governing Territory on the Committee of 24's list left in Africa.

Ms. BORTHWICK (Australia): Australia joined the consensus in favour of this resolution because we support the maintenance of the productive relationship which exists between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

We are making an explanation of position, however, because we consider that the language of paragraph 16, referring to acts of aggression and destabilization by the South African regime, is out of date and not relevant to the current situation in southern Africa.

Regarding paragraph 10, Australia believes that such proposals should be considered on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the terms of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Observer of the Organization of African Unity has asked to be given an opportunity to make a statement at this juncture.

(The President)

May I consider that, taking into account resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, by which the General Assembly granted observer status to the Organization of African Unity, the Assembly accedes to that request?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I therefore call on the Observer of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. SY (Organization of African Unity (OAU)) (interpretation from French): May I, on behalf of Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, thank all those delegations that supported draft resolution A/46/L.19/Rev.1, which constitutes an important stage in the process of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The progress made in the struggle against colonialism in Africa and apartheid in fact means that economic and social problems are taking an increasingly central place now in the cooperation between these two organizations. This is why the resolution that has just been adopted stresses support for the African Economic Community, which is the most important pan-African project since the adoption of the Charter of the OAU in 1963. The Community, which will have 19 protocols, deals with issues as diverse as the promotion of trade and the establishment for the first time of a pan-African parliament.

The African Economic Community, drawing a lesson from earlier such projects, will base itself fully on the participation of the people and will have an adequate framework for strengthening the process of democratization in Africa.

In order to establish this very important project, the OAU needs the support of the United Nations on a wide range of issues in the social, economic and political fields.

(Mr. Sy, OAU)

We need, inter alia, increased technical cooperation in the economic and financial fields, and the support of the United Nations in the settlement of disputes with regard to which the OAU has for some years now been taking action. We could also benefit from the United Nations experience in launching such projects as peace-keeping operations.

Similarly, United Nations assistance is still needed to cope with the consequences of apartheid in South Africa and in neighbouring countries.

The resolution just adopted by the Assembly is therefore an appropriate framework within which to allow our two organizations to benefit from their shared experience, thereby contributing to the strengthening of both.

In the years to come, it is our intention to establish various programmes in new fields related to economic questions, such as the economic recovery of Africa, the environment, and the development of human resources.

Those are the comments I wanted to make on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, and once again we thank all the delegations that have supported the resolution.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 30.

AGENDA ITEM 35

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/586, A/46/623 and Corr.1, A/46/652)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at 12 noon.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): The opportunity for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East has never been greater. The peace initiative begun in Madrid is indeed most encouraging.

The continued occupation of Arab territories seized by Israel is the cause of instability in the Middle East. In itself, this represents a violation of the basic human rights of the people of these territories. The illegal occupation of the Arab lands must not continue if long-term regional security is to be achieved.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Israel maintains that it must keep the occupied territories as a guarantee of its security. I see a paradoxical situation here. There can never be peace and security as long as there is an unlawful Israeli presence in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. The position taken by the Israeli regime only causes further tension. Peace will never be achieved and there will always be instability if the potential for war remains. Good will is needed from all the parties if this threat is to be removed. This must be demonstrated right at the start by the granting of freedom by the Israeli authorities to the lands it has occupied since 1967. My delegation calls on Israel to honour and implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), with regard to the occupied territories. We note with appreciation the efforts of Secretary of State James Baker and his continued reference to these resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

The question of the land of Palestine remains the core problem in the Middle East. The Palestinians are people who have been deprived of their fundamental human rights, whose land has been forcefully taken and whose rights to a home have been denied. My delegation joins the call of the international community for Israel to return to the Palestinians the lands that are rightfully theirs. There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East without a homeland for the people of Palestine.

Related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinians is the status of Jerusalem. The annexation of the Palestinian part of Jerusalem deprives the people of an area that is not only sacred but also a symbol of the Palestinian nation. Israel's claim to exclusive possession of Jerusalem reflects a confrontational stance. In the spirit with which the Madrid conference was convened my delegation calls upon Israel to accept compromise. In this

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

context, we welcome the willingness, expressed by the leader of the Palestinian delegation, to live side by side with Israel.

The Israeli delegation has reiterated here its claim that it needs the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Gaza for Israel's own security. But my delegation believes that the real threat to the security of the region is Israel's own military power. This is demonstrated by its development of a nuclear capability. This potential represents a very grave threat to its neighbours in the region. At the same time, Israel has repeatedly denied the International Atomic Energy Agency the right to inspect, despite Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

My delegation calls on Israel and all parties to the Madrid conference to honour the desire for peace of the international community. I believe that the principle of land for peace reiterated by Secretary of State James Baker will lead to a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Occupation, oppression and the denial of a people's right to self-determination will not assist this process. It is incumbent upon the Israeli occupying forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Palestinian part of Jerusalem. Long-term security cannot be attained through military might. It can only be realized through the will of the people themselves to live in understanding, peace and harmony.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The changes for the better in international politics, characterized by a shift from confrontation to broad-based cooperation between countries, have opened good prospects for building reliable security structures in various regions of the world, including the Middle East. Proof

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

of this is the process now under way for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the longest conflict of the second half of the twentieth century. That conflict bore the grim stamp of the cold war, and only when that war ended did a peaceful settlement of the problems that have accumulated in the Middle East become attainable and realistic.

It is true that the path to the peace conference on the Middle East was a long and hard one, and as the representative of a country which was a Co-Chairman of the Madrid conference, I feel compelled to say that had there not been a fundamental change in Soviet-United States relations, we would not also be seeing those profound changes for the better in the world that enable us to speak today of a completely new period in world history. That point was stressed by President Gorbachev when, in his speech at the opening of the Madrid conference, he said:

"The fact that there is hope for an Arab-Israeli settlement can be understood only in this context."

It is our conviction that the ongoing negotiations on the Middle East should guide the parties involved in the conflict to a historic compromise whereby the psychological, territorial and national disputes can be overcome. The settlement process must bring an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people, which, like other peoples, has the right to self-determination, as established by the Charter of the United Nations. The Soviet Union's support for the rights of the Palestinian people remains unchanged.

The conclusion of the Madrid portion of the peace conference opens prospects for a genuine solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is now important, we feel, to make sure that the talks are actively continued and that the practical work of all parties is stepped up. The Soviet Union hopes that the second half of the peace conference, set to be held in Washington,

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will yield positive results. In any case, as was noted at the recent meeting between Mr. Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, and Mr. Strauss, United States Ambassador to Moscow, the Soviet Union and the United States, as Co-Chairmen of the Middle East peace conference, will continue their active cooperation and partnership in encouraging the efforts made to attain a comprehensive and just settlement in that region.

Accordingly, we believe that the main task of all members of the world community is to promote the success of the conference, to establish conditions that will promote practical progress at the talks, and at the same time to avoid any action which might hamper the forward movement that has now begun. That, in our view, is the main task of the General Assembly with regard to the Middle East problem.

In these circumstances, we feel that it would make sense for the General Assembly at its current session to refrain from adopting the traditional resolutions on the substance of the questions relating to the Middle East settlement, since that substance is now in the hands of the parties to the conference, and we can then look at the practical results produced by the post-Madrid phase of the peace process.

A successful Middle East settlement is in everyone's interest, not only because in our time the rights of peoples and nations and human rights are coming to be an ever more generally recognized and universal basis for the world order but also for a particularly urgent and pressing reason.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

The Middle East has become one of the most weapons-saturated regions. Having learned from the experience of the Persian Gulf crisis, we need now to start to establish in that region a reliable security structure, one of whose pillars could be a zone free of all types of weapons of mass destruction. Many initiatives of great importance have been put forward; their implementation would contribute significantly to creating a less explosive Middle East. Such initiatives include the proposal to create totally demilitarized zones, as well as zones with a defused military presence, which could fulfil an important function in preventing sudden attacks and providing for a system of mutual and international control. I wish to stress that that proposal to a certain extent has already been given practical effect along the Egypt-Israel border and has stood the test of time, which we feel gives us grounds for serious hopes for the success of implementing similar measures between Israel and the Arab parties to the conflict. Of course, this and other types of joint measures must be backed up by appropriate guarantees.

The possibility of a political settlement of highly complex problems has been demonstrated by the example of Lebanon. We welcome the implementation of the settlement plan for the Lebanese conflict in all its aspects, and support the restoration of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon. At the same time, we view the cooperation between the League of Arab States and the Security Council in seeking a solution to the Lebanese conflict as a promising example of cooperation by one of the leading regional organizations and the United Nations.

For several decades, a range of questions regarding the situation in the Middle East has been on the agenda of the General Assembly. Now, for the first time, we have the hope that in the foreseeable future the day will come

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

when our Organization will be able to remove those questions from the agenda and consign them to history, and to focus its efforts on encouraging the countries of the region to establish among themselves relations not simply of peace, but of good-neighbourliness and cooperation.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Community and its member States.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, the Middle East has passed through a period of both despair and hope. On the one hand, we have witnessed the events of the Gulf War and its aftermath; on the other, we have witnessed what we hope are important steps on the path towards a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine. I shall first touch upon the situation in Iraq and the problems that arose in the wake of the war. Subsequently, I shall speak on the problems of the region as a whole, in particular on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine, on the situation in the occupied territories, on Iran-Iraq and on Lebanon.

Reports of the Secretary-General give evidence of the critical situation in which large segments of the Iraqi population still find themselves, in particular in northern and southern Iraq. The European Community and its member States have actively participated in international efforts to address the problems of the displaced persons in Iraq and the refugees in the region, resulting from the situation in Iraq. We appreciate the efforts made by neighbouring States to shoulder a large part of the burden of supporting Iraqi citizens who sought refuge in their countries. We actively supported the international action taken on the basis of Security Council resolution 688 (1991), which paved the way for the establishment of the United Nations Guards contingent in Iraq and the arrival of international humanitarian relief.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Following the recent visit to Baghdad of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General, the Twelve welcome the renewal of the memorandum of understanding on the United Nations humanitarian operation in Iraq for a further six months and the renewal of the United Nations Guards scheme. Personnel and matériel have been made available to the Guards contingent from among the Twelve. The European Community and its member States pledged to meet the contingent's original budget deficit of \$7 million. We appeal to the Government of Iraq to allow the United Nations Guards to help the Iraqi people concerned to take full advantage of international assistance. We commend the Secretary-General and his Executive Delegate and his staff for their efforts in this regard.

The European Community and its member States call upon Iraq to permit the establishment of United Nations humanitarian centres in Kirkuk and the marshes in southern Iraq. The Twelve welcome negotiations between the representatives of the Kurdish population and the Government of Iraq. We call upon all parties to reach a settlement that guarantees the Kurdish people security and respect for their political and civil rights. The Twelve hope these rights will be respected equally for all communities in Iraq, including the Iraqi Shiites. In March of this year the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva endorsed a resolution in which the grave situation prevailing in Iraq was addressed. The United Nations Rapporteur, appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to that resolution, has recently submitted an interim report that is at present being discussed in the Third Committee. It gives no reason to allay our fears.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

The adoption of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) on 9 April 1991 marked an important point in the development of the process whereby the United Nations entrusts the Organization and its Secretary-General with a comprehensive and important task. Resolution 687 (1991) provides the United Nations with an important instrument, unparalleled in the Organization's history, which requires Iraq to live up to its international responsibilities. The Twelve wish to commend the Secretary-General and his staff for the way in which they have performed their demanding task.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

We should also like to commend and encourage the work done by the Special Commission of the Security Council with regard to the implementation of the provisions of resolution 687 (1991) concerning the inspection and elimination of Iraq's mass destruction weapons.

The Twelve deplore the lack of cooperation of the Iraqi authorities with respect to the implementation of some essential parts of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). This applies in particular to the implementation of the provisions regarding the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and missiles. The European Community and its member States are deeply concerned about the reports by the Director General of IAEA that the Government of Iraq has still to comply with its obligations under the safeguards agreement with the Agency.

The European Community remains deeply concerned with the food and health situation in many segments of the Iraqi population. We urge the Iraqi Government to cooperate with the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991). We condemn the failure of the Government of Iraq to meet the humanitarian needs of its population by not implementing these resolutions and we hold the regime in Baghdad fully responsible for the consequences.

Last August, the Security Council endorsed the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of humanitarian supplies through the exports of Iraqi oil. If the Iraqi authorities were to export oil, as provided for in the aforementioned resolution, a major part of the Iraqi oil income could be spent on food and other humanitarian supplies for the Iraqi people.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

We cannot and must not forget the human tragedy and material destruction which have been inflicted upon Kuwait by the Iraqi armed forces. The serious impact of the burning oil wells still has to be assessed in detail. This is also true for the deliberate oil spills in the sea that have resulted in the serious deterioration of the environment as well as of the living conditions in the country and the surrounding region. All this is also a direct consequence of the brutal acts of the Iraqi military authorities for which the regime in Baghdad is held fully responsible. It must pay for the damage, as has been stated in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Twelve regret the difficulties that emerged in Kuwait in the post-war situation. We are preoccupied by the plight of the Palestinian community in Kuwait about which we have expressed our concern. The Twelve welcome recent improvements in relations between the Government of Kuwait and the Palestinian community in Kuwait and we would like to encourage the Kuwaiti Government to pursue a policy of tolerance and respect for human rights.

Before I turn to the situation in other parts of the Middle East, I should like to mention the situation between Iraq and Iran. The Twelve wish to stress the importance of the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which has important implications for the security in the region as a whole. Prospects for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question have improved. Political will from all parties concerned brought about the convening of the Middle East conference in Madrid at the end of last month. In Madrid, the European Community and its member States stressed their constructive partnership in all phases of the negotiating process thus contributing to the efforts to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

We continue to be guided by the principles which have long governed our position. These principles are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The principle of land for peace, the right of all States, including Israel, to live within secure and recognized boundaries, and the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people. Our position on issues relating to the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, is equally well known. A comprehensive settlement should, in our view, encompass these principles. However, we do not claim to prescribe to the parties involved in the current negotiations process how these principles should be put into practice on the ground.

Furthermore, the Twelve reiterate that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War is fully applicable to the occupied territories. We call upon Israel to abide by its provisions and to cooperate with the United Nations. The European Community and its member States underline the need for Palestinians and Israel to contribute to a climate of mutual trust. The European Community and its member States express their condemnation of the Israeli policy of building new settlements and enlarging existing ones in the occupied territories, thus changing the demographic structure in those territories, including East Jerusalem.

We reiterate our appeal to Israel to stop its illegal settlement policy. We also restate our commitment to assist the social and economic development of the Palestinian population of the occupied territories, a situation which was further aggravated by the consequences of the Gulf War.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

I shall now address the situation in Lebanon. The European Community and its member States welcome the improvement of the situation in that country. The European Community and its member States stress the importance of the full implementation of the Taif Agreement by all parties concerned, thus bringing about the complete restoration of the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of a Lebanon free of all foreign interference and all foreign troops. We welcome the progressive disbandment of the militias and the efforts of the Lebanese Government to restore its authority in southern Lebanon.

The Twelve stress once again the need for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which, inter alia, calls upon Israel to respect Lebanese territorial integrity and to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory. The Twelve reaffirm their support for the role of UNIFIL, the United Nations peace-keeping operation to which the member States of the European Community contribute three contingents. We deplore any actions which endanger the lives and safety of personnel serving with that force. The Twelve call upon all Member States of the United Nations to meet their financial obligations and thus ensure the continuation of the operation.

The Twelve warmly welcome the recent release of hostages in Lebanon and commend the Secretary-General for his continuing efforts in this respect.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

However, we remain deeply concerned about the fate of those still detained. The Twelve call upon all parties concerned to bring about their immediate release.

In the light of all the elements regarding the Middle East that I have mentioned in my statement, allow me to conclude by underlining once more the commitment of the European Community and its member States to contributing their share towards bringing about lasting peace and stability in the region.

Mr. AL-NI'MAH (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): I believe that, in this present session, we are trying to understand new concepts and data on the situation in the Middle East, characterized in some of their aspects by the seriousness that has resulted from the efforts made by the main parties at their negotiations on starting the search for a just and permanent, peaceful settlement of the situation in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

I believe that the time for a practical solution to the problem has come with the emergence of a new dawn in international relations and the hopeful beginning we see in the international political climate, which will help us find the best solution to a problem the international community has been discussing for a long time. That time was spent in trying to fathom the lurking difficulties and dilemmas and overcome the obstacles. Those difficulties and obstacles had almost slammed the door in the face of every solution and blocked every way out. The reason for all this has been Israel's occupation of Arab territories by force after committing acts of aggression against their owners. This created a crisis from which the region is still suffering. We are still suffering the effects of this act of occupation with all its attendant oppression, repression and destruction.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

This occupation has threatened and continues to threaten the region with yet more destruction and calamities. The crisis has been aggravated by Israel's persistence in practices which do not show any intention to pursue the path of peace and conciliation.

This has been the history of Israel in the region ever since the conflict began: a history of occupation after occupation, aggression after aggression, undeterred expansion, injustice and plunder.

The policy of the fait accompli is the policy that dominates the region. Israel draws strength from this policy: Israel, for which international law has set bounds that it has by far transgressed, in contravention of international legality, the rule of law and the will of the international community, buoyed up by a sense of absolute power and unbridled aid from every direction.

During the period under discussion, Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Arab Golan. Occupation became usurpation and annexation. Further steps followed: settlements were built in the territories under its occupation, with Israel claiming that it has the right to establish settlements in all occupied territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Arab Golan. It enacted laws to annex Arab Al-Quds and the Golan. It invaded Lebanon and established, after withdrawing, a zone on the Lebanese border it calls the security zone. It has pursued in these territories a policy of oppression, degradation, humiliation and deprivation that has undermined the economic, social and political rights of the Palestinian people and the inhabitants of the other occupied territories.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

As a result, the Palestinian people has lived under tyranny. It has suffered bitterly from the oppression manifested in the policies and practices through which Israel has violated international law and United Nations resolutions, as well as the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

This has led to the intifadah of the Palestinian people. Here we find the Palestinian people in the crucible of a new nation, a new nation with a new spirit, with the blood running hot in its veins, hot with a determination that shines bright in a world too wan to deter Israel. The intifadah of the Palestinian people is at its glorious height, shedding light in the darkness of our darkest night, whence are arising those whose will it is to be the first to make the ultimate sacrifice when that call comes. Why do such people arise? Their secret lies in the hope of martyrdom and the will to resist. The uprising of the Palestinian people is a resounding clarion call to the people of the occupied territories and is echoed by them, a clarion call to rouse our faint hearts and drown our suffering: every hill and every valley in the Middle East is shouting to the Israeli occupation forces to heed that clarion call and withdraw.

Recent international developments have sparked a glimmer of hope that a solution to the conflict in the Middle East will be found. These efforts were crowned with the holding of the Madrid conference, which augured well for a new era without precedent in recent years; all parties concerned showed readiness to cooperate in the negotiations, except Israel, which was intransigent and imposed conditions nobody could accept.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

The Arab side made fundamental concessions for the sake of reaching a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and showed considerable flexibility in trying to overcome all the obstacles that the Israeli side put in the way of negotiations. The Arab side did this because it considers that those negotiations offer an historic opportunity and a hope of reaching an acceptable settlement to the crisis between the two parties.

However, Israel did not listen. It pursued acts that do not show it believes in participating in the forthcoming negotiations. It has continued to establish settlements on the West Bank and the Syrian Arab Golan, and even goes as far as failing to list the Golan Heights region among negotiable items.

Israel tries to block the road to success. It sets one obstacle after the other. It uses flimsy pretexts that are part of its deliberate schemes of annexation of the occupied Arab territories and realization of its dreams of expansion through the denial of realities with a view to achieving its ends.

In Lebanon, Israel persists in its occupation of the southern part of the country, using pretexts in which it turns its back on the world, in the hope that its usurpation of Lebanese territory will become a fait accompli with the passage of time. Lebanon's right to its territory is sacred and cannot be questioned. Peace will have no meaning if the Arab territories remain under occupation. Foreign occupation and peace cannot coexist. Those who have long supported Israel must now wake up. It is through their assistance and support that Israel has persisted in its excesses. It got carried away because it has been able to get away with every act of aggression, contempt for international public opinion in violation of the human rights of the population in the occupied Arab territories, and the trampling of all norms of international behaviour.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

The most dangerous aspect of such behaviour is the huge number of immigrants brought to Israel, to a territory that hardly has room for its original inhabitants, and the housing of those immigrants in settlements built on the lands usurped from their Arab owners, who have been uprooted and whose socio-economic life has been disrupted.

In Syria, Israeli occupation has led to the displacement of half a million Syrians who have been forced to leave their Syrian villages and towns and who are still unable to return to their homes. In the southern, very fertile, part of Lebanon, Israeli occupation has forced the inhabitants to flee to other Lebanese cities. All of this is happening to those Lebanese who have been forced to leave their homes under the eyes of the whole world while tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants are brought in to settle in and occupy the lands that belong and have belonged to the Arab inhabitants for thousands of years. Nevertheless, the international community remains silent in the face of this paradox and looks the other way. In tolerating all this, the international community ignores the injustice done to the Arab inhabitants.

I would like to state here that the desire to live in security is a common denominator and the common dream of all mankind. How could it be denied to the Arabs and made the prerogative of Israel, Israel of whose security and safety the world speaks piously? Israel is a country that goes on arming itself as if it were girding up for a new war. In addition to its superiority in conventional weapons, Israel possesses a nuclear arsenal that is far greater than all estimates. The whole world knows that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. The whole world knows full well this Israeli superiority. It has been made clear by investigative reports which have confirmed Israel's nuclear superiority and the dangerous stage of

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

development attained by its nuclear capability, which it can use tactically and strategically in threatening the security of neighbouring Arab countries.

The efforts made to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East are bound to reach a dead end so long as Israel has a monopoly on nuclear supremacy and can use such supremacy in a manner that can frustrate the world's efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is strange indeed that the international community should allow itself to work hard to prevent nuclear proliferation everywhere except in the case of Israel. Why ignore Israel? How can we reconcile this with efforts for peace?

Israel, which weaved its ambitions from the remnants of dreams attributed to ancient kingdoms, is not unique and exclusive in the world. Israel has the upper hand today and has established itself on the basis of occupation and plunder. It stands in perfidy, unheeding the beliefs of our world, the dialectic and logic of the internationalist will and the principles of right as enshrined in the resolutions of this, our international forum. Israel stands at the pinnacle of its aggression, with its arms reaching out to usurp ancient Arab homes that meant eternity to their Arab inhabitants. Israel in its ambitions is trying to nullify the will of a nation and of a whole world.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

Israel tries to achieve the goals of its unending ambitions and as soon as it achieves one goal, it moves on towards the achievement of yet another. Once it turns a dream into reality, through the absent-mindedness of the international community, it reaps the fruits of aggression and moves on to another act of aggression. Israel has in its glossary only words of domination and knows only hunger to satisfy its insatiable desire for expansion. It finds in domination and expansion a beacon that guides the march of its desires.

After listening in Madrid to the call for peace, Israel goes on avoiding the dictates of logic and falls back on gall in its desire to achieve its goals. It wants to ignore justice and ignore the United Nations and its resolutions. My God, what irony! The irony is in Israel's eschewing of the path of reason as if it were deaf to the calls of the international community, as if it were not listening, to the voice of the United Nations. How long can the international community accept this?

One wonders whether in the case of the Middle East one will find nothing but Israel's persistence in refusing to take heed and its eschewing of any path that may lead to peace. This is Israel, trying day after day to defy justice. This is Israel, trying to expand day after day. In the throes of its delusions of grandeur it continues to threaten to use its might against those who do not possess the weapons it possesses.

I do not think I would be wrong in saying that it is euphoric of the international community, in spite of all its good intentions, to follow the path already embarked upon so that it may become a shining guide for those who are trying to travel at night in the Middle East seeking new hope with a new dawn in which peace and justice will prevail. Yes, our Middle East hopes to see more efforts on the part of the international community without which all

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

United Nations resolutions will remain "dead letters" in the annals of history and without which the world will be simply an unrealized dream had it not been for the tireless efforts and honourable position of the United Nations, hoping that we will see a new dawn with a new alphabet that will give meaning to history.

The new international détente will be extended to our Middle East. This is why my country, which is honoured to preside over the meetings of the Arab Gulf Council for this session, guided by His Excellency the Emir, supported all aspects of peace and cooperation among nations. We supported the convening of the peace conference in Madrid and participated in the negotiations, through the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council who attended as observer. My country hopes that negotiations will proceed until a durable and just peace settlement is achieved with the withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. This forum is called upon to cooperate in calling upon Israel to implement United Nations resolutions, in the hope that a new era may be ushered in in which a durable and just peace will be established in the Middle East.

Mr. AL-YOUSFI (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): The undeniable fact is that anyone who has been following developments in international relations can discern the unanimous belief that these relations are going through a positive and important stage in which the new international political order based on cooperation and goodwill in the peaceful and just settlement of international disputes is evolving so that the United Nations can play its desired central role already clearly enshrined in its Charter and thus enforce the will of the international community as expressed in General Assembly resolutions. This optimistic vision has been consolidated through

(Mr. Al-Yousfi, Yemen)

the resolve and determination shown by the Security Council in its recent handling of a number of urgent international issues. In order for this resolve and determination to become the rule rather than the exception, we believe that this international Organization must show the same determination with regard to all international issues, in particular the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, at the core of which is the question of Palestine, through implementation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter on which this Organization is based as the only principles that would guarantee that the foundations of a just and durable peace in the Middle East and throughout the world would not collapse.

Our stand with regard to the Middle East question is based on firm foundations, namely, the international unanimity clearly reflected in General Assembly resolutions adopted in recent years and the fact that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East dispute and that there will be no comprehensive just and lasting peace in the region unless the Palestinian people exercises its inalienable national rights and Israel completely withdraws from Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds, and from occupied Arab territories. Moreover, international unanimity has defined the framework for the peaceful, comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East. This can be summed up in the invitation to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, in which will participate the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the dispute, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole authentic representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing.

(Mr. Al-Yousfi, Yemen)

The terms of reference have been designed with the aim of enabling the conference to achieve a just and comprehensive solution based on the clearly defined and universally accepted principles enshrined in United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and on the situation in the Middle East - in particular, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Our emphasis on the foundations and framework of a peaceful political settlement in the Middle East does not in any way belittle the efforts that led to the convening of the Madrid conference this year. These are efforts which we hope will be crowned with success and lead to results that will be consonant with the will of the international community. We welcomed the convening of the Madrid conference although we thought that it lacked some positive elements which would have given it a better chance of success. The main positive element that it lacked was participation by the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, with a more earnest role that would have reaffirmed that the settlement of the Middle East question must be achieved within an international context. Moreover, the PLO could have been allowed to participate in the conference on an equal footing with the other parties to the dispute in the Middle East.

Our Arab peoples look with optimism upon the new characteristics which have come to prevail in international relations, and hope that the same resolve, determination and earnestness will be shown in regard to all questions in our region and will lead to the restoration of peace and justice in the Middle East. This will be achieved only if the unlimited political, economic, military and financial support given to Israel is discontinued, only if practical measures are taken to put an end to Israel's defiance of the international will, and only if Israel desists forthwith from its actions that run counter to General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

(Mr. Al-Yousfi, Yemen)

Let me summarize these actions. First, Israel failed to comply immediately with Security Council resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980) and relevant General Assembly resolutions - in particular, the resolution that declares null and void Israel's annexation of Al-Quds, its declaration of Al-Quds as its capital as well as all the measures aiming at changing the city's demographic composition and architectural character and calls upon Israel to rescind all this forthwith.

Secondly, Israel persists in its policies and practices of aggression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the expropriation of land, the establishment of settlements and the annexation of territories, among other measures of terrorism, aggression and repression, which constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law and other relevant international instruments.

Thirdly, Israel persists in establishing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and in settling Jewish immigrants in those territories in violation of resolutions adopted by the international community in this regard.

Fourthly, Israel has failed to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and with relevant General Assembly resolutions which stipulate that Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and declare its laws and jurisdiction is null, void and illegal.

Fifthly, Israel has failed to comply with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and 659 (1990) and with other relevant resolutions. It continues to occupy southern Lebanon and to effect demographic changes therein in defiance of the will of the international community.

(Mr. Al-Yousfi, Yemen)

Israel's record is replete with flagrant and constant violations of Security Council resolutions, and its persistence in committing those violations with impunity in full view of world public opinion. This Israeli record is the exact opposite of the important contributions made by the Arab States with a view to achieving the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and arriving at a lasting, peaceful and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

In the light of these facts, we hope that the international will, as reflected in Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, will be justly and immediately enforced - that those resolutions will not continue to be a cry in the wilderness, as has been the case in previous years. This must come about if our peoples are not to be disappointed and if the United Nations is not to lose its credibility. Can we hope for that? The answer to this question will emerge through the positions and actions adopted by countries towards the situation in the Middle East.*

Mr. ALLAGANY (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): The situation in the Middle East which we are considering today is a tragedy that began with the trampling of the rights of the people ousted from its lands and denied its legitimate rights - the Palestinian people. It will not be possible to resolve this question unless that people recovers its legitimate rights and is enabled to exercise sovereignty over the land of its ancestors.

Through the expansionist policy pursued by Israel, the falsification of history and of geographical realities, that situation has been aggravated to the extent of expulsion of the majority of the Palestinian people, as well as

* Mr. Wilenski (Australia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Allagany, Saudi Arabia)

part of the Syrian and Lebanese people, and the occupation of the territories of those peoples.

The conference on the Middle East began its work in Madrid, and we hope that this process will continue so that a just, comprehensive solution may be arrived at. But peace will not be achieved through the distortion of facts or through continued occupation and aggression. Recent events and well-documented works of research have given the lie to the Israeli myth that Israel is a small, defenceless State that wants to live in peace in an ocean of enemies who reject the principle of a just peace. The Arab position indicates a real desire to arrive at a just and comprehensive solution, whereas Israel has been trying to find ways of hampering the peace process and has created many a side issue on the regional and international levels with a view to diverting attention and putting in doubt the credibility of Arab intentions.

The world looks forward with hope to the success of the conference, whereas Israel is trying to convince the international community that it has already made all the concessions it can make. Israel - indeed, the whole world - knows that security is impossible without a just peace based on compliance with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations and on respect for international legality and the right of States in the region to exist within secure borders, with permanent recognition of the full right of peoples to sovereignty and of the need to enable them to exercise their rights.

The post-cold-war period is now a reality. We are witnessing profound changes in international affairs, and we hope that these will lead to the

(Mr. Allegany, Saudi Arabia)

establishment of a new world order based on the right of peoples to self-determination. This applies to all peoples, including the Arab people. In the past year, the United Nations has shown that it is able to force regimes that commit international crimes to return to the right path.

(Mr. Allagany, Saudi Arabia)

Israel's attempts to change demographic structures and to impose a fait accompli on the Golan Heights, the occupation of the border strip and support of armed gangs in southern Lebanon cannot be accepted, neither in the Middle East nor internationally.

Israel must realize that implementation of United Nations resolutions is the first step towards legality and the achievement of lasting peace based on justice to the region.

The Arab delegations will go to a peace conference to find out whether Israel is prepared to shoulder its responsibilities in implementing United Nations resolutions on the Middle East and whether it is prepared to recognize the legitimate rights of all parties.

While Israel persists in its arbitrary acts of repression against the inhabitants of the occupied territories and its military operations against civilians in Lebanon, the Israelis call for peace and good-neighbourliness and, at the same time, go on inaugurating new settlements in the Golan Heights and the West Bank with the aim of changing the demographic character of the occupied territories. While we hear much talk about civilization, law and peace, the Israeli authorities continue to breach the Fourth Geneva Convention which, according to the United Nations, is applicable to all the occupied Arab territories.

Peace is indivisible. Peace is the peace of good intentions, of good objectives and of sound correct actions. The Palestinians in particular and the Arabs in general aim at peace. It is high time the international community made peace the only possible option in the region: peace that would be based on justice, law, United Nations resolutions and international legality.

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): I am very honoured to be here today and to address the Assembly on the situation in the Middle East.

We are witnessing profound changes in the international arena. The cold war is over and a new political climate of cooperation is gaining ground in spite of some regional setbacks and serious global problems that need to be addressed. All over the world there is a trend towards peaceful settlement of conflicts, democracy and respect for human rights. There is a growing realization that in the long run parties in conflict may enhance their security by searching for common ground for cooperation instead of continuing to adhere to sterile confrontational postures.

The Middle East conflict has long been regarded as one of the most complex and deep-rooted regional conflicts. For decades the situation in that part of the world has caused great concern. That tormented region, with its human richness and vast potential, must not become an exception to the present positive trend in solving regional problems.

In the past year, the Middle East was once again the scene of armed conflict. Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was, as we all know, a flagrant violation of international law. In the long-term interest of peace and security, it is of crucial importance that aggression not be rewarded and that potential aggressors be restrained from violating international law.

The conflict between Iraq and Kuwait involved much suffering for the people in the affected countries. In the wake of the conflict the Kurds, with their long history of suffering, were particularly vulnerable. The brutal violence to which this ethnic group has been subjected is unacceptable, as are the violent acts committed against other groups of the Iraqi population. We welcome the agreement that seems to be within reach between the United Nations

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

and Iraq on the continued presence in Iraq of international agencies for humanitarian purposes.

We are encouraged that the situation in Lebanon is gradually returning to normal. Sweden commends the efforts of the Lebanese Government to extend its authority in accordance with the Taif Agreement. It is our sincere hope that the severe hardships suffered by the Lebanese people during the long civil war are over.

In the southern part of the country the situation is still unresolved. We urge Israel and the forces under its control to cooperate with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and to comply with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). The sovereignty of Lebanon must be respected and foreign domination must cease.

The situation in the territories occupied by Israel remains a source of grave concern. Curfews, administrative detentions, confiscation of land, demolition of houses and administrative harassment by the occupying Power are depressing parts of the daily life of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. We are deeply disturbed by reports about the treatment of detainees and the use of excessive force by the Israeli security forces when confronting Palestinian demonstrations.

We are constantly given tragic reminders of the deep roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Approximately 1,000 Palestinians have been killed in intifadah-related incidents since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising four years ago. There are a great number of victims of intra-Palestinian confrontations, and Israeli citizens have died as a result of violent actions by Palestinians.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

The construction of settlements in the occupied territories is one of the manifestations of Israel's policy that most directly violates international law. We urge Israel to halt immediately the construction of new settlements and to be prepared to deal with all aspects of the issue in the forthcoming negotiations.

In many parts of the world great expectations have been attached to Israel as a democratic example. It is therefore of great importance that Israel ensure respect for human rights in the occupied territories and fully comply with the stipulations of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

Respect for fundamental human rights is closely connected with the efforts to achieve international peace and security. It is therefore of fundamental importance that respect for human rights emerge as the general norm in the Middle East, a region where human rights violations are sadly common occurrences. Reports from Iraq of consistent and outrageous contempt for human rights as well as for fundamental principles of international law are a case in point.

We sincerely hope that the global wind of democratization and enhanced respect for human rights that has swept over the world will have a positive impact also on those countries in the Middle East where democratic institutions are lacking, or not fully developed.

One factor highlighted by the Gulf conflict is that in the missile age control over territories and military superiority cannot ensure the security of the civilian population. True and lasting security is more likely to be achieved through a political process in which the legitimate concerns of the adversary are taken into account than through continued confrontation and military build-up. We appeal to the parties to consider this in their quest for a settlement.

In Sweden's opinion the basic principles for a Middle East settlement remain unchanged.

It is our firm conviction that a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). No settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict will be possible if Israel is not willing to negotiate withdrawal of its forces from the occupied territories. It is equally necessary that Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries be accepted by the States in the region. At the same time, Israel must recognize the national aspirations of

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, including the right to form a State of their own.

The Middle East peace conference in Madrid has rekindled our hope. This was indeed a historic breakthrough. We are particularly pleased by the constructive atmosphere in the Israeli-Palestinian talks. The untiring efforts made by the United States to bring the parties together should be greatly commended.

The conference, as we all know, initiated a two-track approach aimed at simultaneously addressing the Israeli-Arab and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts through direct talks between the parties concerned. This will be followed by important multilateral deliberations to address common regional problems. This process may pave the way towards the comprehensive settlement that the Government of Sweden has always considered necessary for achieving a lasting peace in the Middle East. We strongly appeal to all parties concerned to show flexibility and far-sightedness, and to refrain from any act that may be a hindrance to the process.

We welcome the fact that the United Nations was present in Madrid as an observer. The involvement of the United Nations in many aspects of the Middle East conflict makes it indispensable that a link be maintained between the Organization and the future peace process.

It is our firm belief that the United Nations may contribute to a settlement by, for example, expanded peace-keeping operations in the area, verification and monitoring, electoral assistance and increased economic and technical assistance through various United Nations agencies.

The process initiated in Madrid can provide the parties with a framework for face-to-face discussions of their respective perspectives. We urge the

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

parties to take advantage of this opportunity and make a sincere effort to go beyond their stated positions and seriously try to understand the underlying interests and needs of the other side.

As a first step, mutual confidence-building measures could be taken to create a favourable atmosphere for the negotiations. Such measures could be of various kinds and pertain to settlements, troop deployments, lifting of trade restrictions, and so forth. In Europe we have much positive experience of this confidence-building process.

In closing, let me say that we must rid ourselves of the inclination to see Middle East negotiations as a zero-sum game, where one party's gain is the other's loss. Rather, a comprehensive settlement will lead to a situation where all parties are better off at the end of the process than they were at the outset.

Cooperation in the utilization of water resources will be of crucial importance for the future prosperity of the whole region. The environmental problems can only be handled jointly by the countries concerned. Through common efforts to promote trade and economic development the potential of the Middle East can be fully realized. A cooperative approach to arms control and regional security will in the long run be indispensable.

The international community must make every conceivable effort to support this important peace process. The window of opportunity for peace in the Middle East must be kept open.

We all have a stake in peace in the Middle East. That region has suffered enough. Let us all try to make a reality of the vision of cooperation, the vision of mobilization of the great human and material resources of that crucial region of the world.

Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal): There have been far-reaching changes in international relations in the past few years. Although many of the international disputes are moving towards political settlements, the situation in the Middle East remains one of the top concerns of the international community. It is an outstanding regional conflict, which dates back to the founding of the United Nations. The situation not only has a direct impact on peace and stability in the countries of the region but also poses a threat to international peace and security. However, improvement in the general climate of international relations has created optimism about finding a political settlement of the problem of the Middle East.

My delegation has always supported moves and initiatives aimed at political settlement of the situation in the Middle East. I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to place on record my Government's great admiration for the tireless diplomatic initiatives of the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mr. James Baker, which were often pursued in the face of apparently insurmountable obstacles. His ceaseless efforts culminated in the opening of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid. Nepal joins the international community in applauding this historic event which has brought the parties concerned to a negotiating table, along with the two co-sponsors.

Nepal has long stressed that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East must be based on three fundamental principles: first, the withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied in 1967; secondly, recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination; and, thirdly, recognition of the rights of all States in the region, including Israel, to live in peace within safe, recognized and guaranteed boundaries. We continue to believe that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) offer the only basis for negotiations for lasting peace and security in the Middle East.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

The inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force is a fundamental principle underlying any peace process. As long as a comprehensive and just peace does not materialize, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 will continue to apply to the occupied territories. The safety and security of Palestinian civilians living under occupation continue to demand immediate attention. The establishment of settlements in occupied territories is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and is an obstacle to the peace efforts. Similarly, normalization of relations with Israel would strengthen mutual confidence, thereby ensuring political negotiations.

Against the background of decades of wars, violence, terrorist activities and deep-rooted mutual suspicion, the recently launched peace process is one of the most formidable tasks ever undertaken. The peace process launched in Madrid seeks to address all aspects of problems of peace, security and stability in the Middle East through direct bilateral and multilateral negotiations in stages. The parties concerned have a historic responsibility to work for step-by-step confidence-building measures.

Since 1988 when the Palestine Liberation Organization accepted Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) the Palestinian people have demonstrated a willingness to negotiate. Israel, Jordan and Syria have taken important steps by participating in the direct negotiations in Madrid. We welcome the participation of Lebanon in the process. As a troop contributor to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Nepal supports the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to restore its legitimate authority over the entire territory of Lebanon.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

Nepal looks forward to the second stage of the peace conference on the Middle East. It represents an historic opportunity. We appeal to the parties concerned to desist from statements or action that might jeopardize the whole process.

Mrs. PILOTO (Zimbabwe): The present debate is taking place at a time of fresh hopes for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East question. The current initiative launched by the United States and the Soviet Union has broken the impasse on the peace process. Last month's Madrid conference finally brought all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to the negotiating table.

The process set in motion at Madrid has now reached an important and critical stage. Our debate this session must serve the purpose of lending support and encouragement to this important process and, above all, of creating a positive atmosphere that facilitates the removal of any potential obstacles. All parties to the negotiating process have the responsibility to refrain from policies and actions that might hinder the process. In this regard, we call upon Israel to halt the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories. The policy of creating such settlements not only places the delicate peace process in jeopardy but is also illegal. We also urge Israel to demonstrate its commitment to a peaceful solution by ensuring the improvement of the living conditions and the safety of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

The issue of Palestine remains at the core of the Middle East question. Zimbabwe is, therefore, of the view that a lasting resolution of the Middle

(Mrs. Piloto, Zimbabwe)

East conflict lies in the realization by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, which entails the right to establish their independent State.

Also central to any peaceful settlement in the Middle East is the complete withdrawal by Israel from all occupied Arab territories. In this regard Zimbabwe wishes to stress the importance of complete and uniform implementation of all Security Council resolutions pertaining to invasion and acquisition of territory by force in this region.

The continued illegal occupation of parts of Lebanese territory by Israel in violation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) hinders the efforts of the Lebanese people to complete the process of national reconciliation and to enable the State of Lebanon to exercise its authority over all Lebanese territory. For its part, the international community should stand ready to provide the much needed assistance for national reconstruction in Lebanon.

May I conclude by expressing Zimbabwe's full support for the peace process set in motion by the Madrid conference, and by commending the conveners of the conference, the United States and the Soviet Union, for their untiring efforts that have opened up this window of opportunity.

Mr. RAJROCCI (Austria): During the past year the Middle East region has gone through a period of momentous change. The Gulf War, which has brought destruction and unspeakable suffering to numerous innocent civilians, has again highlighted the dangers to peace in this region and once more underlined the urgency of establishing a just and equitable solution to the problems in the Middle East.

(Mr. Hajnoczi, Austria)

In the course of the Gulf conflict, the United Nations has been entrusted with new and unprecedented tasks, in particular in Security Council resolutions 661 (1990) and 687 (1991). The full cooperation of the Iraqi authorities with respect to the implementation of all decisions of the Security Council is required.

Iraq is called upon to guarantee the security and the exercise of fundamental political and civil rights to all communities in Iraq, including the Kurdish people and the Iraqi Shiites. All parts of the Iraqi population still need international humanitarian assistance. In order to provide such assistance, the continuing presence of international personnel, including United Nations guards, is of great importance.

Austria welcomes the improvement of the situation in Lebanon, in particular the disbandment of the militias and the efforts of the Lebanese Government to restore its authority in the south.

We commend the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts in securing the release of the hostages in Lebanon and call upon all parties concerned immediately to release those still detained.

With regard to the situation between Iran and Iraq, we note with concern that some elements of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) are still not fully implemented. While commending the work of the Secretary-General, we call for renewed efforts in order to arrive at a speedy resolution of all outstanding issues.

(Mr. Hajnoczi, Austria)

The opening round of the peace conference for the Middle East which was recently held in Madrid is a first step on a long and rocky road. The convening of this conference marks significant progress, which is due mainly to the political efforts of the Co-Chairmen, and in particular the unrelenting efforts made by United States Secretary of State James Baker to bring the parties together. We hope that the parties will respond positively to the invitation to hold the second round of bilateral talks in Washington in early December.

In their search for new horizons all parties concerned have shown historic courage, which requires the broadest support.

Austria has always held that the best way to end this long-lasting conflict would be for the adversaries to get together at the conference table and face their problems eye to eye. Therefore, we fully support the present peace talks. There is no real alternative to these talks except renewed destruction, misery and suffering. However, we do not believe that to these complex problems in the Middle East region quick solutions can be found, but we firmly hope that endurance and the spirit of compromise on all sides finally will bring about the long-awaited peace in that shattered region. To this end, Austria appeals to all the parties concerned to show a maximum amount of goodwill and flexibility in order to make the ongoing talks succeed.

We are convinced that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which laid down the principle of land for peace, must form the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region. A conflict settlement along these lines must, on the one hand, include the implementation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and, on the other,

(Mr. Hajnoczi, Austria)

recognition that a number of measures must necessarily be taken for the full implementation by Israel's neighbours of Israel's right to exist within safe and recognized boundaries.

In expressing hope for the establishment of peace, which is very vulnerable to all kind of impediments, we cannot but voice our concern that Israeli settlements are still being built in the occupied territories and that international agreements are still being violated in those territories. If peace is to come, impediments of this kind have to be removed and positive developments initiated. The establishment of a solid basis for economic cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbours would be a first step in this direction. Confidence-building measures and a reduction of armaments in the region should further pave the way to peace, which is crucial not only to the region but to the whole world.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.